

# Parenting Views



January ~ April 2006

## "Encouraging Our Children and Ourselves"

**Parents** need to be kinder to themselves and not so self-critical. They need to credit themselves for their commitment and courage in doing a difficult job and for the times they "get it right". They need to have the courage to be imperfect and to take one day (one moment?) at a time. They need to take time for themselves (*hah!*), compare notes with other parents (*look, we are all in the same boat*), and ask for support. They also need to teach and expect their children to be helpers so that everyone does their equal share.



**Children** need nurturing, kindness and love, of course. Less obvious, they need their parent(s) to enjoy them, to enjoy getting to know them and to express their enjoyment to them. They need recognition for their efforts and achievements. They also need "thanks" for their helpfulness. Sometimes they need help; sometimes they need to do it themselves. Children do not need all that they demand. Spoiling and pampering does harm. It's your job to discriminate what children need from what they demand. Children do not need to be in charge. They need for you to be in charge (firm, strong, strict...call it what you will). They also need for you to keep your head while they are losing theirs. Finally, they need you to have faith in them and in their ability to cope with difficulties...with a little help from you.

Harry Ireton, Ph.D., is a developmental psychologist, parent educator and founder of *Child Development Review*: research-based tools for appreciating development and school readiness, [www.childdevelopmentreview.com](http://www.childdevelopmentreview.com). Family Information Services, May 2005.

### QUOTE

"The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself... that's where it's at."

Jesse Owens

(1939 African American Gold Medalist, Olympics in Germany)

## How to Raise Kind, Empathetic Children

- ◇ Be a parent who can read and understand your children's emotional cues and empathize with their feelings. For example, a child who is irritable and grumpy during the days before a move is probably also feeling scared, worried and anxious. In addition, this child is undoubtedly experiencing loss, grief and sadness.
- ◇ Practice understanding others feelings using characters from television and movies. When we feel differently recognizing other people's feelings takes practice.
- ◇ Ask children to imagine how they would feel if they were in the other person's place. *"How would you feel if you were the little brother and your older brother laughed at you and encouraged all his friends to do the same?"*
- ◇ Encourage children to think about what they could have done differently to prevent hurting the other person or what they can do to mend what already happened. If they can't, provide suggestions.
- ◇ By reminding them of similar experiences in their lives, you can help children understand others. *"Do you remember when you would visit your cousins Jim and Marvin and they would play together and not let you play? Do you remember how left out you felt? Well, that's how Maria feels."*
- ◇ Help children stay centered. *"I know how powerless you feel when you're angry. When you feel some of that intense anger and are tempted to say mean things, I want you to visualize yourself as a rooted tree. You can remain rooted and not let the ocean of anger overtake you."*
- ◇ Support children's naturally compassionate nature. *"I'm proud of you when you help your little sister without being asked."*
- ◇ Teach children what to say to themselves to prevent themselves from saying or doing mean things. *"I'm angry right now. I'm going to walk away, button my lips, or say what I think/feel when they do that and tell them what I need."*
- ◇ Set up caring projects for your whole family to participate in; for example: sponsoring a child overseas, shoveling your elderly neighbor's walk, bringing a meal for a friend who is ill or grieving.





You Earned It! You Keep It, Michigan!

## Give Your Paycheck a Boost!

**The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is a federal tax refund for eligible working individuals working individuals and households. You must have earned income to apply for the EITC. Households that qualify for the EITC could receive a tax credit refund of up to \$4,400.

### Who qualifies for the EITC?

- ♦ Workers who earned \$31,030 or less in 2005 with one qualifying child (\$33,030 for married and filing jointly) to receive a credit up to \$2,662.
- ♦ Workers who earned \$35,263 or less in 2005 with more than one qualifying child (\$37,263 for married and filing jointly) to receive a credit up to \$4,400.
- ♦ Workers who earned \$11,750 or less in 2005 with no qualifying child (\$13,750 for married and filing jointly) to receive a credit up to \$399 (must be between the ages of 24-65)
- ♦ Investment Income Limit = \$2,700

**How do Michigan Workers claim the EITC?** This credit is available by completing Schedule EIC in the Federal 1040 or 1040A. Volunteer Income Assistance program provides IRS-trained volunteers to prepare and file tax returns for FREE. Credit unions and Michigan Works! Offices are offering a web-based, self-preparation service called I-CAN! EIC™. Written at a fifth-grade level, ICAN! EIC allows eligible tax payers to complete and e-file their **federal and state tax returns on their own and for free.**

### Local Services:

- ♦ ICAN! EIC free file is available through several Michigan credit unions and Michigan Works sites. Go to [www.michiganeic.org](http://www.michiganeic.org) and click on ICAN! EIC for a guided process on filing your state and federal forms.
- ♦ IRS-approved volunteer services are available in your community.
- ♦ Use the website to get statewide information about the EITC at [www.michiganeic.org](http://www.michiganeic.org).

**Low-income residents can get free tax help** beginning January 28. Any person who makes less than \$20,000 a year or any family whose household income is less than \$38,000. Residents must bring a driver's license or state identification card and their social security number. Residents should also bring bills or receipts for medical insurance, heating costs last year, student loan interest, tuition and dependent care expenses. Other records may be needed.

- \* Clinton Township Consumers Energy · 35350 Kelly Road · Saturdays, January 28 - April 1 · 10 am - 2 pm.
- \* Leaps and Bounds Family Services · 8129 Packard, Warren · January 29 - April 9 · Noon - 3 pm · Appointment only. Call 586.759.3895.
- \* Roseville Senior Center · 18961 Common · Saturdays, January 28 - April 8 · 10 am - 2 pm · Appointment only. Call 586.447.4606.
- \* Samaritan House · 58944 Van Dyke, Washington Township · Thursdays, February 2 - March 30 from 2 pm - 6 pm · Saturdays, February 4 - April 1, from 10 am - 2 pm · Appointment only. Call 586.677.7590.
- \* Trinity Lutheran Church · 45160 Van Dyke, Utica · Saturdays, February 4 - April 15 · 9 am - noon.

For more information, call 313.647.9620

### AARP offers tax help

(Services are available to everyone, not just seniors.)

Free tax counseling and preparation for taxpayers with middle and low incomes with special attention being paid to those 60 and older. Individuals participating are asked to bring their 2004 income tax return and 2005 tax documents from employers, banks, social security, pensions, property taxes and home heating costs. Appointments required where indicated.

- ♣ **Center Line Parks and Recreation Department**, 25355 Lawrence, 10 am - noon, Tuesdays, February 1st - April 15th.
- ♣ **Village of East Harbor**, 33875 Kelly Drive, Chesterfield Twp., 9 am - 2 pm, Wednesdays, February 1 - April 15.
- ♣ **Eastpointe Senior Center**, 16600 Stephens Drive, Eastpointe, 9 am - 1 pm, Tuesdays, February 1 - April 15. Appointment required. Call 586.445.5080
- ♣ **Mt. Clemens Public Library**, 150 Cass, 9 am - 2 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays, February 1—April 15.
- ♣ **Romeo Senior Center**, 361 Morton Street, Romeo, 9 am - 1 pm, Wednesdays, February 1 - April 15. Appointment required. Call 586.752.9601.
- ♣ **St. Lucy Catholic Church**, 23401 Jefferson Ave., St. Clair Shores, 9 am - 1 pm, Wednesdays, February 1 - April 15.
- ♣ **St. Rene Church**, 35955 Ryan Road, Sterling Heights, 9:30 - noon, Mondays, February 1 - April 15.
- ♣ **Christ Lutheran Church**, 32300 Schoenherr Road, Warren, 9:30 - noon, Fridays, February 1 - April 15.
- ♣ **Washington Senior Center**, 57880 Van Dyke, Washington Twp., 9 am - 1 pm, Thursdays. Appointment required. Call 586.752.9601.

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[www.macombcountymi.gov/msuextension](http://www.macombcountymi.gov/msuextension)

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